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Martin Luther at Worms 1521: Captive to the Word of God

“If then, I am not convinced by testimonies of Scriptures, or by clear rational arguments,—for I do not believe in the pope or in councils alone, since it has been established



erred and contradicted each other—I am bound by the Bible texts that I quoted. And as long as my conscience is captive to the Word of God, I cannot nor do I want to retract anything when things become doubtful. Salvation will be threatened if you go against your conscience. May God help me. Amen”

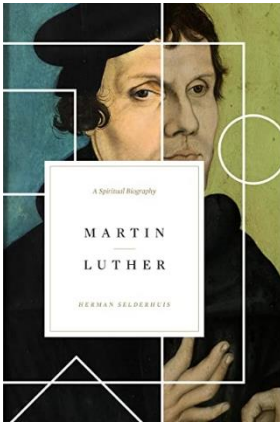
No Hero

The danger is to see Luther standing before the emperor as a hero. He was not. He even asked for permission to sleep over a decision as to whether he would recant or not. If we would focus on Luther, we would do what he rejected. “I do not believe in the pope or councils” Luther said. No heroes, no Christian leaders, no tradition, no Luther, Calvin or whatever great theologians were before or came after. Only Scripture. ‘I am bound by the Bible texts that I quoted.’ That is the lasting message for the church and for every Christian. It can cause a split in the church as we saw in the Reformation, it can cause theological isolation, it can cause loss of money, prestige and career, it can even cause loss of life.

No Book

Important is also to see that Luther was not bound by just a sacred book. At Worms he speaks about ‘the testimonies of the Scriptures’ and about ‘the Word of God’. We are not bound by a book but by God who speaks

to us through his Word. Luther at Worms warns us against liberal theology where the Bible is seen as just a book, but also against a theology in which the Bible becomes an impersonal book of just divine texts. Luther warns against losing God through defending the Bible.

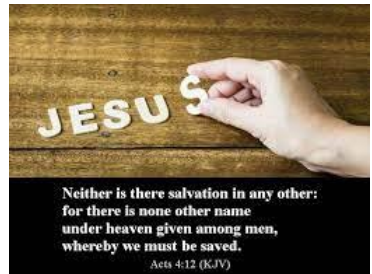


No Nonsense

There is another relevant lesson in Luther's witness at Worms when he says that he also wants to be convinced by clear rational arguments. The church today faces many challenges, also many intellectual and theological challenges, and we may not flee from them. We need solid theology that works with 'rational arguments' in order to defend the faith. Luther at Worms encourages us to profound theological education, for academic theology, for training theologians that are able to discuss rationally with unbelief and that are able to discern and attack heresy.

No Salvation

Most essential is that Luther made clear at Worms that Scripture is about salvation and that Reformation is about salvation. Luther had no choice; he could not retract because salvation was at stake. We discuss a lot in church, but do we still see that salvation is essential? Is the goal of our preaching to please or to save? Is my concern as Christian my temporal or my eternal well-being? Luther at Worms reminds us that we received the Word of God as means to save people from eternal loss. The 'testimonies of Scriptures' testify that outside of Christ there is damnation. Luther appeals in Worms to his conscience. Well, this should be constantly on the conscience of the church and of every believer, that everyone needs to be saved. Including myself.



Prof Herman Selderhuis
President
Theological University of Apeldoorn
Netherlands

INSIGHTS from EZRA of the POST EXILIC ERA (Ezra 7:6-21)

Rev Jack Sin

Message at Gospel Light BPC on Aug 15, 2021

There were 3 main groups to return to Jerusalem after the 70 years exile and Ezra led the second group to return to restore worship in the temple in 458BC.



The good testimony of the scribe

Ezra has 3 lessons for us. Consider the:

- Prepared Teacher (v10) - The 3 important verbs are Seek-Do-Teach
- Protected Traveller (v11, Ezra 8:22) - He asked God to protect him and others in the long journey
- Prolific Intercessor - He was a prayer warrior for the people of the Lord

How it fits together:

- ▶ Jeshua & Zerubbabel return (Ezra 1-2)
- ▶ Begin rebuilding the temple (Ezra 3-4)
- ▶ Zechariah & Haggai motivate the people to finish the temple (Ezra 5-6)
- ▶ Ezra returns with more exiles (Ezra 7-10)
- ▶ God uses Haman to convince more Jews to return home (Esther)
- ▶ Nehemiah builds the walls of Jerusalem
- ▶ Malachi warns of religious legalism

Zerubbabel completed building the temple in 536BC, but there were not many worshippers – there was a need to revive and to feed the souls.

Ezra was trained and involved in full time service while Nehemiah was a layman (cupbearer = like today's Principal Private Secretary to PM or President in our civil service)

The Priest's role was to represent people to God.

The Prophet's role was to represent God to People.

Scribes reproduced (copied accurately) God's word for people and interpreted and taught the law to the people.

V6 - Ezra was a READY scribe and prepared to serve God anytime

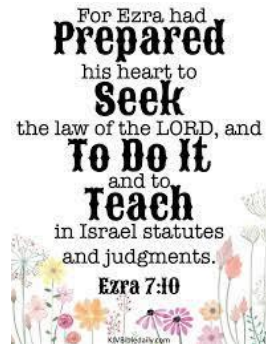
****Ezra 7:10(life verse of Pastor Jack)**

Prepared heart to serve God with all diligence;

Solomon in Proverbs 4:23 says 'Keep thy heart (guard this heart) with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.'

Ezra PREPARED his heart to:

- SEEK the law of the Lord
- DO it i.e. practice
- TEACH Israel statutes and judgements (note, the order is important)



(1) SEEK

Here is Jeremiah 's advice from Jeremiah 45:5, "And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest."

**Zephaniah 2:3 says Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment;

SEEK righteousness, SEEK meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger. Let us Seek Ye first the Kingdom of God Mt 6: 33 and not worldly gain or wealth

Numbers 12:3 - Moses is an example of meekness personified "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth."

Consider Moses and the 3 stages of his life:

- First 40 years seeking and studying in Egypt (SEEK),
- next 40 years living in the Midianite desert (DO),
- followed by 40 years serving, leading and teaching the people of Israel through the wilderness (TEACH).

= Total of 120 years

Our lives too, generally divide into 3 segments during our 70 to 80 years, namely 25 years seeking or studying, 25 years of working or doing, and the final 25 years can be committed to teaching others.

(2) DO

Never traffic in unpractised rule. Do you apply what you learn from the Bible?

“If you ask people to give a tract, do you do it too?”

“If you ask people to pray and read the bible, do you pray and read the word as well?”

Philippians 4:9 “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, DO: and the God of peace shall be with you.”

(3) TEACH

DO these 3 things as a church ministry, following Christ’s example in Matthew 9:36 where Jesus went about all the cities and villages, and there were 3 things He did, namely

- teaching in their synagogues,
- preaching the gospel of the kingdom,
- healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

The Life of Christ in His public ministry can be summarised in 3 words : Teach - Preach – Heal (or care and comfort in our times).

Note that Ezra was a PRAYER Warrior too. Ezra 10:1--11 He prayed for the nation with fervency and weeping, and the revival of his people and God heard it

Conclusion

Let us be just like Ezra and let us consider to SERVE God with the 4 Cs:

CONVICTION, COMMITMENT, CONTEMPLATION & CONSECRATION

Tan Ai Lin

Gospel Light BPC

**Installation of
Deacons and
Dedication of
Church Session by
Eld Gary Tay on
5 Sep 2021.**



Church Session 2021-2023
*(L-R) Dn Dr Tan Kwong Leen,
Rev Dr Jack Sin, Dn Tan Yue Kay,
Eld Loke Tat Luen (Not in photo)*



**Monthly
Neighbourhood
Bible Class (NBC) on
the study of 2
Samuel.
Come & Join Us on
every 1st Friday of
each month!**

FINISHING WELL THE RACE OF LIFE

Lord's Day Program from Jul - Sep 2021

JULY

- 4 The Power of a Sound Mind (2 Tim 1:1-7)
- 11* Hold Fast to Sound Words (2 Tim 1:8-18)
- 18 The Imageries of a Christian (2 Tim 2:1-14)
- 25 Study to be a Biblical Practitioner (2 Tim 2:15-19)



AUGUST



- 1 A Sanctified Vessel for God (2 Tim 2:20-26)
- 8* The Characteristics of the End Times (2 Tim 3:1-9)
- 15 Fruitfulness through the Word (2 Tim 3:10-17)
- 22 The Sacred Duty to Share the Gospel (2 Tim 4:1-5)
- 29 Perseverance in the Ministry (2 Tim 4:6-10)

SEPTEMBER

- 5 Faithful Coworkers Labouring Together (2 Tim 4:11-22)
- 12* Love and Truth in Action (2 John)
- 19 The Case Study of 3 Persons (3 John)
- 26 Consider God in Troubled Times (1 Kings 4:1-11)



Memory Verse

2 John 8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Worship Service! For our visitors, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave.
2. Pastor speaks today on “**Love & Truth in Action (2 John)**”, the quarterly theme on “Finishing Well the Race of Life”.
3. Pastor speaks next Sunday on “**The Case Study of 3 Persons (3 John)**”.
4. Sunday School classes continues after worship service:
 - WCF Shorter Catechism Class – Pastor Jack
 - New Testament Survey – Choo Siang/Joseph
 - Studies in Numbers – Dn Kwong Leen
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren.
6. Pastor will minister at the Grace Reformed Evangelical Church (Hong Kong) Special Online meeting on **Fri 1 Oct 2021** on “**Making Sense of the Sovereignty of God & Human Responsibility in a Global Castastrophe**”. Topics include “*The Sovereign God, Global Catastrophe and Human and Church Responsibility*” & “*Coping with Phobia and Anxiety in a Pandemic and Post Pandemic World*”.
7. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The Sep prayer list is available in church.
8. Neighbourhood Bible Class meets monthly on the first Friday of each month in church on the study of 2 Samuel.
9. The Pandemic book can be purchased through Dn Yue Kay (Hp: +65 97450311) or via email at sovereignhopebpc@gmail.com.
10. Do kindly observe the safety measures of the church and assist with the weekly cleaning of the premises.
11. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**
